



Owasco Lake Watershed Management Council

Meeting of the Directors
April 16, 2024, 10:00-11:30 AM

Owasco – Ed Wagner, **Cayuga County** – Aileen McNabb -Coleman, **City of Auburn** – Ginny Kent
Niles – Joan Jayne, **Locke** – Thane Benson, **Scipio** – Nancy Hart, **Fleming** – Karen VanLiew,
Town of Moravia – Terry Palmer, **Village of Moravia** –Chris Fulton,
Village of Groton – Theodore Skibinski, **Summerhill** – Charlie Ripley, **Sennett** – Tom Blair, **Dryden** –
Anne Clark
Executive Director- Adam Effler

Presiding: Dr. Adam Effler

- A. Board of Directors – Roll call: **Owasco**-Ed Wagner, **Cayuga County** – Aileen McNabb -Coleman (online), **City of Auburn**-Ginny Kent, **Niles** – Joan Jayne, **Summerhill**-Charlie Ripley, **Scipio** – Nancy Hart, **Town of Moravia**- Terry Palmer, **Fleming**-Karen VanLiew, **Dryden**- Anne Clark (online). Ex Officio members present; Ann Robson, John West, Tony Prestigiacomio, Frank Clarke, Abigail Hai, Joseph Decker
- B. Approval of the Agenda: Motion to approve the April 16.2024 agenda made by Ginny Kent, seconded by Joan Jayne. Motion unanimously carried.
- C. Approval of Minutes from the March 19, 2024, Board Meeting; Motion to approve made by Ginny Kent and seconded by Joan Jayne. Motion unanimously approved.
- D. Public to be Heard: None heard.
- E. Director’s Summary – Adam Effler (distributed for review prior to meeting). Audio of the presentation can be found at <https://www.olwmc.org/news>

Watershed Rules and Regulations

Project Update:

The NYSDOH has discontinued providing monthly project updates for the OLWMC and the greater public. On advice of NYSDOH counsel, the department is now focused on re-evaluating the accuracy of guidance provided to the field regarding the development of Watershed Rules and Regulations. The NYSDOH will provide notification in the event that a decision is made to re- establish a schedule for amending 10 NYCRR 104.1.

Recognition, Awareness, Education and Outreach Projects Update

- The OLWMC’s staff feature article published with the Citizen on April 4, 2024 provided recommendations for lake friendly lawncare practices in spring. OLWMC staff will continue spotlighting watershed protection efforts, including residents and programs making positive strides in watershed protection.
- OLWMC staff are finalizing the 2023 annual report. The report will be printed and distributed to municipal and partner offices and will be given in the form of a presentation to the City of Auburn City Council on May 9, 2024. The presentation will align the with City’s annual

mayoral proclamation in support of Lake Friendly Living programming and messaging.

- The OLWMC's aquatic invasive species 'Clean, Drain, Dry' billboard has been moved adjacent to the Emerson Park boat launch to continue to promote boat stewardship there.

Nine Element Watershed Plan (9EP)

- The OLWMC's 9E Project Coordination Committee discussed next steps and a phased approach towards preparing project proposals and fundraising for watershed streams inventorying and engineering planning in 2024 to direct stream restoration projects between 2024-2025, for funding tributary monitoring between 2024-2025, and for developing an Owasco Lake Watershed Agriculture Program (OLWAP) similar to what was created for the Skaneateles Lake watershed.

Project Update:

- The Finger Lakes Land Trust (FLLT) was invited to participate as a member of the 9E Coordination Committee. The group plans to leverage synergies between FLLT's recently NYS-awarded \$1,240,000 for Land Acquisition to Protect Owasco Lake, which targets protections of the Sucker Brook wetland, and the City of Auburn's NYS-awarded \$75,000 for stream corridor assessments in the Owasco Lake HUC12 subwatershed, which includes Sucker Brook. Restored streambanks and wetland corridors are ranking criteria for FLLT while targeting land acquisitions to create protected preserves and easements.

- The Committee is updating the 9E Plan's implementation checklist to track the status of associated programming and projects implementation as we move forward.

- The SWAT report has been made available through the Cayuga County Planning Department's website in the near term (more details provided below).

Watershed Lake and Tributary Monitoring

2024 Project Update:

The Cayuga County Planning Department has developed 2024 lake and watershed monitoring and implementation priorities in the context of annual Finger Lakes Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FOLLOWPA) funding. Their overall 2024 workplan, approved by the NYSDEC, included monitoring the tributaries in the Owasco Lake Watershed to collect data that can be used for updating the 9EP SWAT for Owasco Lake. Cornell University ran SWAT scenarios for a 20% reduction in phosphorus loading to the lake to simulate the effects of expanded nutrient management Planning Tier 3 or equivalent, restricted app of fertilizer and manure in areas that abut streams, and cover crops. A MEANSS approach was used to estimate relocating septic systems within 100 feet of surface waters.

Two of the tributary sampling sites are also being used to collect baseline data for the OLWMC's "Owasco Lake Watershed Critical Streams Restoration Project" funded by the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation – Sustain Our Great Lakes (SOGL) program.

The following additional details were provided by the Department, concerning their support for 2024 monitoring initiatives:

- *FOLLOWPA funds this year will be used for the installation and implementation of BMPs by SWCD, the O&M for the USGS Owasco Inlet Gage, CSLAP for OWLA, Duck Lake Association and Lake Como Association, OWLA Tributary Sampling Program, Owasco Watershed Data Portal, public outreach and education on invasive species and water quality, aquatic vegetation harvesting, O&M of the boat cleaning station at Emerson Park, support for the septic system*

inspection program and updating and utilizing the SWAT model.

- *The Quality Assurance Project Plan for the OWLA Tributary Monitoring Program funded by the FLOWPA and Cayuga County has been approved by the NYSDEC. Training for the samplers occurred on April 10th.*

- *FLOWPA funds will be used this year again for Nick Colas to update and utilize the SWAT Model. The final report from last year's work is available on the 9E Plan website.*

- *Cayuga County will fund the buoy in Owasco Lake. FLOWPA funds were used last year to create a data portal that contains the buoy data and historical data from John Halfman. FLOWPA funds will be used this year to add more data to that portal.*

- *The County is funding the CSI Tributary Monitoring Program and the CSI HABs Monitoring Program, and contracts are in process.*

The Department has made the Owasco Lake Watershed SWAT Model Report available on their website. Here's a summary of report features:

- *A recommended practice in the Owasco Lake Watershed 9E Plan was to update watershed SWAT Model with new data and information including hydrologic data files. Cayuga County utilized Finger Lake-Lake Ontario Watershed Protection Alliance (FLOWPA) funds to enhance and update the Soil and Water Assessment Tool (SWAT) nutrient loading model that provides a quantitative framework for the Owasco Lake Watershed planning process and guides the prioritization of projects for implementation. The model was used to analyze three scenarios. These three scenarios were grassed waterways, grade stabilization structures and streambank stabilization. This work was performed in accordance with an approved NYSDEC QAPP.*

NYS-awarded Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2)

Project Review:

- Consultants for the City of Auburn's NYS-awarded Drinking Water Source Protection Program (DWSP2) worked with City of Auburn water resource managers and partners to identify potential sources of Owasco Lake water quality contamination and provide recommendations for resource protection. The DWSP2 committee reviewed and edited the draft plan. A refined draft of the City of Auburn's DWSP2 was delivered from the contracted consultant to the City of Auburn and circulated among the project committee. The local group

awaits final plan approval from NYSDEC and NYSDOH to move forward on plan implementation and associated project(s) proposal(s) development. Barring any changes based on agency feedback, the plan can be finalized. At that point, Auburn City Council will be asked to endorse the plan.

- The Town of Owasco received consultant support through NYS to develop its DWSP2. The sixth Town of Owasco DWSP2 group meeting held on October 12, 2023 hosted a final review and discussion among local partners involved in development of the proposed plan. The consultants involved in the project have finalized and delivered the plan to NYS agencies for their review and approval.

Municipal Codes and Ordinances

Project Review:

- Proposed erosion and sediment control ordinances concerning new construction activities were prepared for OLWMC directing municipalities for their independent board review and

consideration for adoption.

○ The Village of Moravia adopted the Sediment and Erosion Control Plan, and associated Appendix E, prepared and proposed by the OLWMC for advancing municipal control requirements for new construction activities.

○ The Town of Fleming reviewed the proposed ordinances and concluded that they already have adequate protections in place concerning new construction activities as part of an existing overlay district.

Harmful Algal Blooms (HABs) Identification and Programming Review:

• A summary of HABs reported during 2023 is available in the archive section of the Harmful Algal Blooms webpage. Historical HABs data through 2022 is provided on Open NY, which gives public access to digital data (Search the "Data NY" portal for "Harmful Algal Blooms"). One can view historical water quality monitoring data, including HABs information, at the DOW Monitoring Portal. Both Open NY and the Monitoring Portal will be updated with 2023 HABs data over the coming months.

• Funding for HABs monitoring, to provide for strategic science and data collection, was included within the 2024 NYS one-house budget.

Land Holdings

Fillmore Nature Preserve Project Review:

Project Update:

• The OLWMC responded to an offer for project support by the Partners for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) and proposed for a plant inventory, including for both terrestrial invasive and sensitive native species, at the Fillmore Nature Preserve. The proposal included a request for plant pictures and blurbs for inclusion on the educational kiosk that will be constructed there.

• During the week of April 8, 2024, the Town of Owasco made further headway staking the planned public access lot. The lot will be cleared with an additional 5-10' wide perimeter around the gravel for OWLA to create an adjacent garden in the month of May. The implementation of the wildflower garden is poised to act as an OLWMC/OWLA collaborative Lake Friendly Living public event in late May. Municipal Highway

Departments for the Towns of Moravia and Summerhill have been contacted and will truck gravel in early May for the creation of the public access lot.

Other Potential OLWMC Acquisitions Review:

• TNC has expressed interest in having the OLWMC own and steward two additional properties poised for acquisition and preservation within the Owasco Lake watershed. These include:

1. 72-acre parcel in Venice, dense wetland
2. 100-acre parcel in Groton, mixed farmland

▪ On October 4, 2023, OLWMC staff and Board Chair, Ed Wagner, visited the Groton parcel to evaluate the property and prompt discussions about the OLWMC taking ownership of the property at some point in the future.

TNC will present these acquisitions to the OLWMC Board for ownership and stewardship consideration.

Additional Partner Land Acquisitions/Targets Review:

- Under 2023 Round 19 of the Water Quality Improvement Projects (WQIP) Grant, the Finger Lakes Land Trust, Inc. (FLLT) received \$1,240,000 for Land Acquisition to Protect Owasco Lake. FLLT will work with landowners and partners in the Owasco Lake watershed to permanently protect approximately 500 acres through direct acquisition and the use of perpetual conservation easements. The program will focus on conservation and stewardship efforts to protect Owasco Lake. The proposed program grant will provide FLLT an opportunity to create a new nature preserve on the Sucker Brook wetland, one the largest remaining natural wetlands in the region and conserve additional lands throughout the Owasco Lake Watershed.

- The FLLT, in its recent testimony to the Joint Legislative Committee on Environmental Conservation, explained that New York land trusts are currently holding over 100,000 acres of land that was acquired upon the request of the state, with a market value of over \$150 million. This backlog is largely due to two issues:

1. The lack of adequate staffing at the Real Property Bureau and the Office of General Counsel at DEC and within the Real Property Bureau at the Office of the Attorney General;
- NYS's current approach to property title review involves a higher standard than is typical in the private sector and does not include the acceptance of title insurance to resolve title issues.

Projects and Funding

Tributary Assessment and Identification Project (TAIP)

SOGL Project Update:

EA Engineering (EA) completed and delivered the required environmental compliance documentation/forms for the project and is awaiting feedback. EA Engineering and CCSWCD conducted a March 25, 2024 field trip to record baseline conditions, channel types, and to evaluate parcel access. CCSWCD and EA staff spoke with adjacent landowners and discussed survey needs for project modeling and design. EA's engineering deliverables for the project are poised to meet the CCSWCDs expectations and needs. Conditions of Site 7 have changed since the initial project proposal last spring. The alignment of the channel and banks in the vicinity of Site 7 appears to have been altered and bank erosion at Site 7 is no longer as significant as previously observed. The property owner apparently self-implemented these changes. From the perspective of prioritizing funding sources and adaptive management, the project team plans to remove Site 7 from the planned scope under the SOGL Grant and followed up with our new NFWF grant administrator, to determine whether there is need for any documentation or approval to memorialize this change with NFWF. EA Engineering held the initial field visit on April 9th (Task 2) when they collected site data, conducted a drone flyover, and identified plant/aquatic species as observed. The project team is attempting to identify a laboratory to run streambank soil samples.

Next project team meeting will be held on April 16, 2024 at 2-3PM.

Invasive Species Job Opportunities:

The Finger Lakes Partners for Regional Invasive Species Management (PRISM) and Finger Lakes Institute (FLI) have announced the 2024 recruitment process launched this past week for regional watercraft inspection stewards and aquatic invasive species technicians. There will be employment opportunities for both aquatic and terrestrial stewards. Please find PRISM watercraft steward job opportunities here:

<https://www.hws.edu/offices/hr/employment/summer.aspx>

Municipality Buy-In

Project Review: The OLWMC continues to encourage participation and directorship from the remaining towns within the watershed that have yet to join to help direct project initiatives. They include the Towns of Venice, Sempronius, Groton, Genoa, Skaneateles, and Lansing.

- F. Board of Directors/Municipality Representatives Feedback: None heard.
- G. Treasurer's Audit and Finance Report
- H. March 2024 Financials Approval – Joan Jayne reported that as of March 31, 2024 the Total Assets-\$369,995 and Total Liabilities and Equity-\$369,995. Motion to approve financial reports was made by Terry Baxter and seconded by Nancy Hart. Motion unanimously approved.
 - i. Dr. Effler reported the pro forma budget is underway, the Annual Audit is in progress and the \$100,000 CD rolled over for one year at 5% interest.
- I. Lake Level Report – John West reported we are approaching the summer lake elevations of 712.5 to 713. We are at 7.1260 and are continuing to monitor weather and rainfall.
- J. Fillmore Nature Preserve Trails Design, Mapping, and Marking – Cornell University Design Connect presented on plans for the Fillmore Nature Preserve. Audio and video of the presentation can be found at <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
- K. NYSDEC FL Hub Update – Tony Prestigiaco reported on Hub Up. For HUB updates: <https://www.olwmc.org/news>
- L. The Nature Conservancy Update – Olivia Green-unavailable
- M. Owasco Watershed Lake Association Update – Ann Robson reported they are presenting educational programs to the 7th graders at Auburn High School, an Earth Day (April 22, 2024) program will be sponsored at Westminster Church, rain garden preparations are being held in Moravia May 4, 2024 with OLWMC, Woolly Adelgid surveys are being conducted to check for changes in the treated trees, and on June 26 OLWA will participate in 'Business After 5' event at the Owasco Yacht club with Auburn Chamber of Commerce - food, libations and music will accompany the event. In April OLWA was named the Business of the Month by the Chamber of Commerce.
- N. Cornell Cooperative Extension Update – Frank Clarke reported they have been busy with Shop Meetings regarding manure and soil analysis. They are gearing up for summer field work and the Cornell IPM meeting.
- O. Watershed Inspection Monthly Report – Abigail Hai and Joseph Decker. Audio and video of the presentation can be found at <https://www.olwmc.org/news>

Abigail Hai reported she is leaving the watershed inspection division and will be moving into a position at Cayuga Co Soil and Water. OLWMC is recruiting a new watershed inspector.
- P. Communications: Dr Effler reminded the members of the upcoming Manure Exposition at Patterson Farms on July 17-18, 2024.

Q. Issues of Concern: None heard.

R. Next Meeting is scheduled for May 21, 2024.

S. Adjourn: Motion to Adjourn was made by Karen VanLiew, seconded by Terry Baxter. Motion unanimously approved. The meeting adjourned at 11AM.

Respectfully submitted,

Vivian Cunningham